

LITTLE WOMEN

– Extra

Level 1

This level is suitable for students who have been learning English for at least a year and up to two years. It corresponds with the Common European Framework level A1. Suitable for users of CLICK/CROWN magazines.

SYNOPSIS

The book is set in Massachusetts in America in the early 1860s: the time of the American Civil War. It tells the story of the four March sisters – Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy – over the period of a year, from Christmas to Christmas. The girls' father is away at the war and times are very hard. The girls and their mother struggle to make ends meet. Meg (16) works as a governess for a wealthy family; Jo (15) takes care of her old Aunt March; Beth (13) looks after the house; and Amy (12) is still at school. The sisters are very different in character and they each have different strengths and weaknesses. Meg loves beautiful things but has a tendency to be vain. Jo, a tomboy with a gift for writing, has a quick temper. Beth is timid and shy but she is devoted to her sisters. Amy is artistic but often selfish. They each have to face different problems and changes in their relationships with each other as the year progresses. By the end of the year, a lot of things have changed, and the second Christmas is very different from the first.

THE BACK STORY

Little Women was written in 1868 by Louisa May Alcott during the 'Golden Age' of Anglo-American children's literature (1865–1920) when many children's classics were written, including

Alice in Wonderland (1865), *Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Treasure Island* (1884) and *The Secret Garden* (1911). *Little Women* was an immediate success, selling over 2000 copies – a substantial quantity at that time. The story is partly biographical. It is set in Alcott's own family home in Massachusetts where the author grew up with her three sisters, and some people have suggested that the character of Jo in the novel could be based on Alcott herself.

The book gives us a wealth of insights into the position of girls and women in American society 150 years ago and helps us to appreciate how different things were then. Since *Little Women* was written, there have been several films made of it, plus an opera and even a Broadway musical. It continues to be read, seen and enjoyed by people of all ages all over the world.

MEDIA LINKS

DVD: Several film versions of *Little Women* are available on DVD/video: among them, the 1994 film directed by Gillian Armstrong and the 1933 film, starring Katherine Hepburn.

CD: A recording of *Little Women* is available to accompany the Scholastic Reader.

Internet: You can find more information at the Scholastic website www.scholasticeltreaders.com/women.

HOW TO USE YOUR SCHOLASTIC READER

Choosing and motivating

Is this the right story for your class? Have they seen the film? Motivate them with background information (see The Back Story above) and by reading aloud the first page of the story with dramatic atmosphere.

Organising

Plan a class reading schedule. Decide how many pages to set for reading each week. Select exercises from the Self-Study section at the back of the reader and extra activities from this resource sheet to go with each chunk of reading. (All answers on page 4 of this resource sheet.)

Using the CD

Students can listen and follow in their books. They can listen and then read. They can read and then listen. All these activities will improve their reading speeds and skills.

Using the DVD

Select the English language option on the DVD. The film is about 1 hour 50 minutes. You could show it in chunks of, say, 20 minutes in parallel with the class reading schedule. Alternatively, show it when the class have finished the book, as a reward.

Glossary

Go to 'New Words' at the back of the reader. Translate the words

with the class or get students to find meanings at home. The Vocabulary Builder on page 3 of this resource sheet practises the new words in a different context.

The language of Louisa May Alcott's time

Introduce the words from 'The language of Louisa May Alcott's time' (page 8) and extra vocabulary from the 'Useful Words in the 1860s' (pages 6–7). Students will find these words and phrases useful as they read this story and other stories from the same period. They help to give a flavour of the original, without making the style difficult to access.

Fact Files

Set these as self-study or use for whole class work. These provide background information about the author of the novel, Louisa May Alcott; the American Civil War; and life for women in the 1800s.

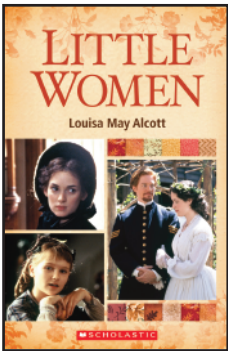
What did they think?

Get everyone to do a written or spoken review of *Little Women*. Compare opinions. Will they go and see the film? Did you like it? Let us know at readers@link2english.com.

COMPETITIONS AND UPDATES

Check www.scholasticeltreaders.com for competitions and other activities linked to the Scholastic Readers.

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES



LITTLE WOMEN

– Extra

People and places

Who ...

- a) is the oldest sister? *Meg*
- b) is the youngest sister?
- c) is at the war?
- d) helps the March family?
- e) lives with his grandfather?
- f) is 'Marmee'?
- g) Who likes nice clothes?
- h) Who is a year older than Amy?

Where ...

- i) is Mr Laurence's house?
- j) does the story start?

Chapters 1–4

1 Match the three columns.

The sisters	wanted this christmas present ...	but gave Marmee ...
a) Meg	1) drawing pencils	i) some shoes
b) Jo	2) music	ii) some perfume
c) Beth	3) pretty clothes	iii) some gloves
d) Amy	4) a book	iv) some handkerchiefs

- a) *3 iii* b) c) d)

2 Answer the questions.

- a) Who did Meg enjoy meeting at Mrs Gardiner's party? Why?
Sallie Gardiner and Annie Moffat – they talked about clothes and fashion.
- b) Who did Jo enjoy meeting at the party? Why?
.....
- c) Why did the girls have to have a carriage home?
.....

- d) What was Meg's job? Who did she work for? What were the children like?
.....
- e) Who did Jo work for? What did she do? What did she like about it?
.....
- f) What did Beth and Amy do every day? What made them sad?
.....

3 Talk to a partner. Describe what you did last Christmas Day. How was your day different from the Marches' Christmas Day?

Example: *We didn't act in a play. We watched television ...*

Chapters 5–8

1 Match the two parts of the sentences.

- a) Jo went to see Laurie i) because the girls left her at home.
- b) Beth didn't go to the Laurence house ii) because she put her book on the fire.
- c) In the end she went almost every day iii) because he was all alone at home.
- d) Amy was very angry with Jo iv) because she was too shy at first.
- e) Jo was very angry with Amy v) because she loved to play the piano.

2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false sentences.

- a) Mrs March was happy when Meg went to stay with the Moffats.
F. She wasn't happy.
- b) The Marches and the Moffats had the same ideas about life.
.....
- c) Meg enjoyed staying with the Moffats and seeing friends.
.....
- d) Meg was happy in her old white dress at the first party.
.....
- e) The flowers from Laurie and her mother helped her feel better.
.....
- f) Meg looked very different at the second party.
.....
- g) Laurie told her, 'You're beautiful!'
.....
- h) Meg told her mother everything. 'I made a mistake,' she said.
.....

RESOURCE SHEET STUDENT ACTIVITIES

3 Find the mistakes in the sentences and correct them.

- a) The summer holidays were ~~two~~ ^{three} months long.
- b) One day they went up the river for breakfast.
- c) Meg liked Mr Brooke. He had very nice ears.
- d) In October, Jo took two plays to a newspaper.
- e) Mr Brooke had one of Meg's socks on his desk.
- f) Jo's happy story was in the newspaper.

4 Talk to a partner. What things did Meg like about Mr Brooke? What things do you think are important in a person? (Describe your perfect person?) Make a list.

Example: *funny, interesting, nice smile . . .*

Chapter 9—Epilogue

1 Who says this? To who?

Beth	Hannah	Jo	Mr Brooke	Mr March	Mrs March
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- a) 'I must go to Washington, children.'
Mrs March to her daughters.
- b) 'I can go with your mother to Washington.'
.....
- c) 'They gave me that money for it.'
.....
- d) 'I think I'm ill too.'
.....
- e) 'She's going to be alright.'
.....
- f) 'You are all lovely young women.'
.....

2 In the Epilogue, who ...

- a) marries John Brooke? *Meg*
- b) marries a professor?
- c) marries Laurie?
- d) dies?
- e) goes to Europe?
- f) goes to New York?
- g) has two children?
- h) has a school?

3 Beth says: 'Christmas is very different this year.' Work with a partner. Make a list of the differences between the Marches' first Christmas (in Chapters 1 and 2) and their second Christmas (in Chapter 10).

FINAL TASKS

1 Writing. Work in pairs. Write Jo's diary for the evening of Christmas Day at the end of the book. How was Christmas different this year from last? How do you feel about:

- having your father home again? • your short hair?
- Meg and Mr Brooke?

2 Speaking. Things were very different in the 1860s in many ways. Talk to a friend and make a list of the differences mentioned in the book – and any others you can think of.

- What things were better? • What things were worse?
- Which period do you prefer to live in: then or now?

VOCABULARY BUILDER

1 Look at the 'New Words' at the back of *Little Women*. Match words from the list to these definitions.

- 1. You can write or draw with this. *pencil*
- 2. It's cold and white. You can make balls with it!
- 3. Shakespeare wrote a lot of these, *Hamlet*, for example.
- 4. Actors do this in films or plays.
- 5. You find them in gardens. They're lots of different colours.
- 6. When you do this, you make a sound with your mouth.

2 There is a wrong word in each of these sentences. Circle it and find the right word in the 'New Words' list.

- 1. The Nile is the longest radio in Africa. *river*
- 2. I can't skirt! I keep falling down on the ice.
- 3. He didn't talk to her because he was too sky.
- 4. Did you get some nice problems for Christmas?
- 5. When did the America Civil Wall end?
- 6. "I love you," he said. "Will you money me?"

3 Complete the sentences with words from the 'New Words' list.

- 1. The man fell into a *hole* in the street.
- 2. Can I write it on Facebook? No! It's a
- 3. My glass of water is warm. I need some
- 4. Happy ! Thank you. Same to you!
- 5. If you're, why don't you see a doctor?
- 6. Those children get everything they want. They're very

LOUISA MAY ALCOTT (pages 48–9)

Interview

Students work in pairs to script an interview with Louisa May Alcott, based on the information on the page. They act out their interview – as a form of rehearsal – and then swap pairs to role-play the (this time unscripted) interview with a new partner.

Poster Presentation

Students work in small groups. They choose a favourite children's book written in (or translated into) their own language and share /research information about it – including the storyline, facts about the author, any films made, etc. They produce a poster with the information – including pictures if possible – and present it to the rest of the class.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR (pages 50–1)

Quiz

Students prepare five questions on the information in the spread and then either

- quiz each other in pairs or groups, or
- give their questions to the teacher, who uses them for a class team game.

WOMEN IN THE 1800s (pages 52–3)

Make a list competition

Students work in groups to list as many differences as they can think of between life for women now and life for women in the 1800s. Groups take it in turns to report back and score points for each thing that they have thought of. The group with the most ideas wins.

Class magazine

The class imagines what kinds of things might be included in a women's magazine of the 1800s (e.g. articles on women's lives, 'agony aunt' letters, recipes, fashion, beauty products, etc). Students then choose an aspect and work in pairs to design a page or a spread. The final pages/spreads could either be put up on the walls or else combined together to form a complete magazine.

FILM/CD FOLLOW-UP

What happens next?

Read a chapter with the students and play the relevant part of the CD at the same time. Stop at some dramatic points and ask what has just happened and what is about to happen.

Spot the difference

Play a scene from the film and ask students to note two things that they think are different from the book. After the scene, stop the film. Students discuss their ideas in pairs, and then report back to the rest of the class. How many differences can they find altogether?

Roleplay

Before they watch a scene from the story on the DVD, students work in pairs (or threes) to act out the scene themselves. Some possible dramatic scenes include:

- Amy begs to go to the theatre with Meg and Jo (page 25)
- Jo learns that Amy has burnt her book (page 26)
- Aunt March bursts in on Meg and Mr Brooke (pages 43–44)

Students then watch the DVD and compare it with their own performances! (They may then want to do their roleplay a second time.)

ANSWER KEY

Self-Study Activities (pages 54–6)

- act/play, shy/lady, Christmas/present, skate/ice
- a) whistle b) spoilt c) War d) pencil e) hole f) perfume
- a) Mr March b) Amy c) Jo d) Beth
- a) They were poor and there was a war.
b) gloves/handkerchiefs/perfume/shoes
c) Their Christmas breakfast.
d) A wonderful tea.
- a) Jo to Meg b) Meg to Jo c) Marmee to Meg and Jo
d) Laurie to Jo
- a) v b) iv c) vi d) iii e) ii f) i
- Open answers.
- a) snow b) secret c) ill d) river e) marry f) flowers
- Open answers.
- The correct order is: c, e, a, b, d.
- a) didn't go b) book c) angry d) wasn't e) Amy f) weren't
- a) The Moffatts were very rich and cared about money and clothes, etc. The Marches were very poor and cared about people and being happy.
b) Meg wore her old white dress for the first party and Belle's lovely blue dress for the second party.
c) Mrs March wanted her daughters to be good, clever and happy. Mrs Moffat wanted her daughters to marry rich husbands.
- 13–14 Open answers.
- a) W. Mr Brooke went with Mrs March to Washington.
b) W. It was difficult for Jo to sell her hair – she cried about it.
c) R d) R e) W. Meg decided to marry Mr Brooke after Aunt March talked to her.
- Open answers.

Resource Sheet Activities

People and places

- Amy c) Mr March d) Hannah e) Laurie f) Mrs March
- Meg h) Beth i) next to the Marches house
- in Massachusetts in America

Chapters 1–4

- b) 4 i c) 2 iv d) 1 ii
- b) Laurie – he talked about different countries.
c) Meg's foot hurt.
d) A governess for the Kings. The children were spoilt.
e) Aunt March – she talked and read to her – her books.
f) Beth cleaned the house, Amy went to school. Beth wanted piano lessons, Amy didn't like her nose!
- Open answers.

Chapters 5–8

- b) iv c) v d) i e) ii
- b) F. They had different ideas c) T d) F. Meg wasn't happy.
e) T f) T g) F. He said: 'You're not you!' h) T
- b) breakfast > lunch c) ears > eyes d) plays > stories
e) socks > gloves f) happy > sad
- Mr Brooke was quiet and knew a lot of things. He was good-looking and had nice eyes. Open answers.

Chapter 9–Epilogue

- b) Mr Brooke to Meg c) Jo to her family d) Beth to Jo
e) Hannah to Meg and Jo f) Mr March to his daughters
- b) Jo c) Amy d) Beth e) Amy f) Jo g) Meg h) Jo
- Christmas 1:* They had no presents and no breakfast. Their father was away.
Christmas 2: Father was home. They had presents and a special dinner. Mr Laurence, Laurie and Mr Brooke were with them. All the girls were different.

Vocabulary Builder

2. snow 3. plays 4. act 5. flowers 6. whistle
2. skate 3. shy 4. presents 5. War 6. marry
2. secret 3. ice 4. Christmas 5. ill 6. spoilt